



Editorial

Forgotten Connections

One of the most famous lines in Dutch poetry is ‘Lees maar, er staat niet wat er staat’ (‘Read it, it does not say what it says’) from *Awater* by Martinus Nijhoff (1934), a poem that has become part of the literary canon. The line has gone on to lead a life of its own as a maxim in the Dutch-speaking world, used chiefly to alert readers to the hidden meanings of words and signpost unspoken intentions in writings. But Nijhoff’s celebrated line also comes to mind when reading Anna Koldeweij’s article, which takes as its starting-point a work apparently painted by Isaac Israels. For years, a very conspicuous signature put viewers and readers on the wrong track.

Working from sketchbooks in the Rijksmuseum’s collection and other resources, Anna Koldeweij demonstrates that we see things other than what they are: the painting is not by Israels and can be securely attributed to Bramine Hubrecht (1855-1913). The identification of the maker led not only to a new identification of the subject but is at the same time a story about inequality between male and female artists. Hubrecht, one of the first generation of women admitted to Dutch art academies, gradually gained international recognition by showing at exhibitions in Antwerp, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Munich, Rome, St Louis and Chicago, but this appreciation failed to leave a lasting impression. The false signature of a successful male contemporary on her painting *Sicilian ‘Brides’ in a Church Interior* now serves as an embarrassing reminder of this forgetfulness and denial.

Malika M’rani Alaoui also relates a forgotten history from the nineteenth century. The collection of negatives – an exception in the Rijksmuseum’s collection – that she attributes to the painter Laurens Lodewijk Kleijn (1826-1909) tells the colourful story of international photographic pioneers who gathered in Rome’s Caffè Greco and of a Dutch princess who married her coachman, fell into disfavour at the Prussian court, emerged as a patron and art collector, and eventually appointed Kleijn as curator of her art collection in Schloss Reinhartshausen. We travel with Kleijn from Deventer to Antwerp, Rome, Stuttgart and back to the Dutch village of Bathmen.

Like both authors, Jenny Reynaerts, former editor of *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* and senior curator of nineteenth-century painting in the Rijksmuseum, in her recent book *Mirror of Reality: Nineteenth-Century Painting in the Netherlands* corrects the prevailing image of a Dutch art world with a strongly national bias. When one looks in more detail, particularly beyond the canon, one sees more than the small-minded Holland of popular reputation. At the time when the Rijksmuseum was built as a showcase of national identity, the ‘living artists’ were anything but inward-looking and they saw the connection with the European art world as self-evident.